

The Battlefront
of the
324th INFANTRY
Meuse-Argonne
November 9-11, 1918

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Pictures of the Battlefront
of the
324th INFANTRY

Meuse-Argonne, November 9-11, 1918



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Photographed by
CHAPLAIN T. G. VICKERS
April 28 - May 2, 1919

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Dedication

To the memory of those brave men of the 324th Infantry, United States Army, who went "over the top" on the right wing of the Meuse-Argonne battle November 9-11, 1918, in the Great War, and gave their lives performing their duty, and whose life-blood has forever hallowed the soil where these pictures were taken this little collection of views is dedicated with abiding admiration for their courage and self-sacrifice by the amateur who photographed the scenes.

To Ex-324th Infantrymen

Greetings:



THE collection of pictures displayed on the following pages was made April 28—May 2, 1919, while the undersigned was on leave, and are the best of about 190 exposures. Some of them are not very satisfactory, but are included to make a complete series from Bouee—where regimental headquarters was located—to Ville-en-Woevre—the regiment's objective in the advance of November 9-11, 1918. It will be seen that most of the shell holes are nearly filled with water—but what wouldn't get full of water in France from October to May? The sky was cloudy, and when some of the pictures were made snow was falling. It was therefore very difficult to get sufficient light for good results. The collection is sent out, however, with the idea that every member of the regiment may see some familiar scenes to remind him of that battlefield where every man faced death and knew not what moment would be his last. The volume is far from perfect, but the views were made under great difficulties in a country at that time still deserted and desolate, and I am glad to be able to make these reminders available to the men with whom I was associated during those terrible days of November, 1918, and for whom I cherish an undying admiration and affection.

Following the above statement about the pictures I turn to another matter of greatest importance. I make no apology for what I am going to say, for I believe it to be more important to us who are just out of the army and to our country than anything else in the world. No worthy man could sustain the relation which it was my privilege (with the other chaplains of the regiment) to sustain toward all the members of the organization without de-

veloping a genuine affection for them and a friendly interest in all that pertains to them, whether in the army or in civil life. Such a body of men assembled for battle makes a serious situation for the enemy. Such a body of men scattered throughout the country in their homes and home communities makes a leavening element that will go a long way toward helping to make America an invincible force for right in the world, or a selfish, money-grabbing, power-drunk giant which will not only consume others, but must certainly come to destruction itself. All experience since Adam transgressed in the Garden of Eden has shown without exception that no nation or individual can come to any safe and sound maturity if the Lord God is left out of account. No life reaches a high level of manhood without the elements which obedience to Him alone can supply. On the battlefield, in the camp, on the hike, everywhere, we in the army in the Great War saw examples of manly unselfishness and heroic self-sacrifice in some of the men we knew. How did we feel toward those men? We were drawn to them and gave them our unstinted admiration and respect. We felt honored to associate with them. In time of crisis we naturally gravitated toward them and made them our leaders. There was something about them which we trusted and believed in instinctively. They were sincere, up-standing, unaffected men. They never boasted, but were always humble in the things they did. Often perhaps, those men did not themselves realize what they were and did not know, according to the names usually applied in ordinary civil life, what they set forth in what they were. I want to tell you. Such men were simply living examples of what loyalty to the Right makes of men. In many cases such men were, without knowing it as church people speak of it, followers of Jesus, the Man of Galilee. Their unconscious obedience to Him inevitably made of them men admired and respected by everybody. Some such men recognized what it was they followed. In all such

cases such men showed those fine qualities as a result of the habit of setting Right and Truth ahead of everything else in their lives.

Now, I want to say that the Christian Churches in America stand for and foster just those qualities. Nothing connected with mortal man is perfect in this world, and the Church is not without her faults. She has many. Many of her people have disobeyed and are sadly in need of repair as followers of Jesus. It has always been so and will always be so. But the central thing is this. *Jesus Christ, the highest type ever clothed in flesh, Saviour of the world, is in the Church.* Whatever of good there is in the world is found at its best in the Church. The imperfect and bad sometimes hide the good, but it is there and has kept the Church alive and will keep her alive forevermore. The very things which we so admired in men in the army are the things which belong more perfectly to Christ than to any man who ever lived. Do we admire courage, fearlessness, self-sacrifice? With matchless courage and utter fearlessness He sacrificed Himself freely for others. He never grovelled or acted in a manner unbecoming to the manliest spirit that ever drew breath. Always He was the master of every situation, because He was perfect Master of Himself. He is all any man could desire in the Leader he chooses to follow. *He is in the Church.* Tie up with the church of your choice and *get to work in it.* You will find Him, and He will bring to you more of manhood and of the power to live your life satisfyingly than any other companion or leader you ever saw or heard about. Try it.

America needs manly, unafraid, unselfish men everywhere as she needs nothing else. Politics needs to be purged of its self-seeking, unscrupulous elements in order that our government may serve the ends for which it exists. It is imperative that there be born a feeling of brotherliness and co-operation among Capital, Labor and the Public. Wherever you look there is the same call for men who will

do their work not only with an eye to their own rights, but also with due consideration for the other fellow. Social life needs to be cleared of some of its dangers. In Church, in politics, in industry, in business, in the social fabric, in international matters, in everything there is the same urgent demand, nay, pressing *necessity* for *men who have seen the value of Right*, that they may decree by the irresistible force of their determined convictions that this country shall not become the victim of selfish or half-crazed men seeking to ram some pet scheme down the nation's throat. If we who fought in the Great War make up our minds that America shall go right she will go right, and no power can lead her astray.

It is the man determined to live according to Truth and Right that must keep this land safe. Hence I say, tie up with the church. In the home you make with the wife of your choice see that truth prevails. Keep it sacred and inviolate. Be a family man. Make your home strong and wholesome for your children and your children's children. Be humble. Be self-controlled. Be a man among men. Let the woman who walks by your side through life feel that she has a real man to depend upon. Let her children feel that their father is the hero of all human heroes for them.

Do and be these things and blessing and honor will attend all your days. Moreover, you will make your contribution, due and full, to the greatest nation this world ever saw.

Are these merely the ravings of a preacher? Submit them to any wise man and true and abide by his verdict. They are affectionately said out of the deepest heart of one who with all that he had tried, for Jesus' sake, to serve you faithfully. May God bless you!

T. G. VICKERS

Ex-Chaplain, 324th Infantry

Raleigh, N. C.



1. Just outside Brion-sur-Ource, looking down the snow-covered road toward Chatillon-sur-Seine



2. French store on wheels



3. Near Fort Douamont before Verdun. Before the war this hillside was covered with a typical French forest



4. Another area before Verdun formerly covered by a forest. Verdun is about 15 kilometers northwest from the battle area occupied by the 324th Infantry, November 9, 10, 11, 1918



5. The shell of the ancient and historic cathedral at Rheims northeast of Chateau-Thierry. In this church the kings of France from 1200 to 1750 were crowned. The Germans ruined it beyond repair



6. Refugees at St. Mihiel returning to their ruined homes



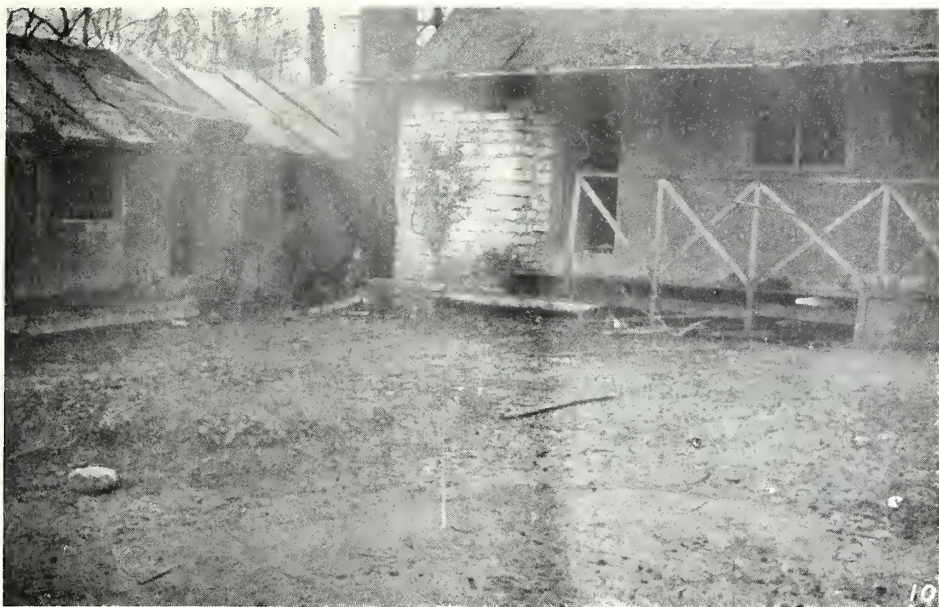
7. Entrance to Camp Bouee, where Regimental Headquarters was located during the operations in November, 1918



8. Exterior view of quarters of Regimental Staff at Bouee. An unexploded bomb dropped by a German aviator is embedded in the parapet



9. Corridor in interior of picture No. 8. Officers' quarters at the left



10. Regimental Headquarters at Bouee



11. Another view of Regimental Headquarters at Bouee



12. Narrow gauge railroad in woods. Over this track all supplies were brought to Bouee and carted from there to the troops in the front lines



13. Road leading to the Regimental Supply Dump at Bouee. Shacks in background



14. General view of Supply Dump at Bouee. Through this point passed all supplies of food and ammunition for the regiment



15. Shacks at Supply Dump



16

16. Shacks at Supply Dump



17

17. Shacks at Supply Dump



18. Shacks at Supply Dump



19. Shacks at Supply Dump



20. General view of Bordeaux. Here were located the brigade P.C. and at first the regimental P.C.



21. One of the company kitchens was located here by the roadside at Bordeaux



22. Quarry at Bordeaux in which another kitchen was located



23. This trench was about ten feet deep. Across the beam (6x6 inches) shown here, many of the wounded were brought out to ambulances on the road near Haudiomont during the night of November 9th. The road is just outside the picture at the right. The third battalion dressing station was in a dugout in the front-line trenches at the bottom of a steep hill at the left. Can the tortuous wire entanglements and maze of communicating trenches of that hill ever be forgotten?



24. Within the door at the center just behind the barricade was the 323d Infantry dressing station near Haudiomont. This is just across the road from No. 23



25. Here some of our dead were buried just back and to the right of the building shown in No. 24. The bodies had all been removed to one of the large A.E.F. cemeteries when this picture was taken in April, 1919



26. General view over No-Man's Land looking toward the woods where the 1st and 3d battalions were engaged. Taken from the top of the hill above the rock quarries at Bordeaux



27. Another general view from the hill above Bordeaux looking a little toward the right across the fields in the background where the 2d battalion advanced. Manheuelles is just outside the picture on the right



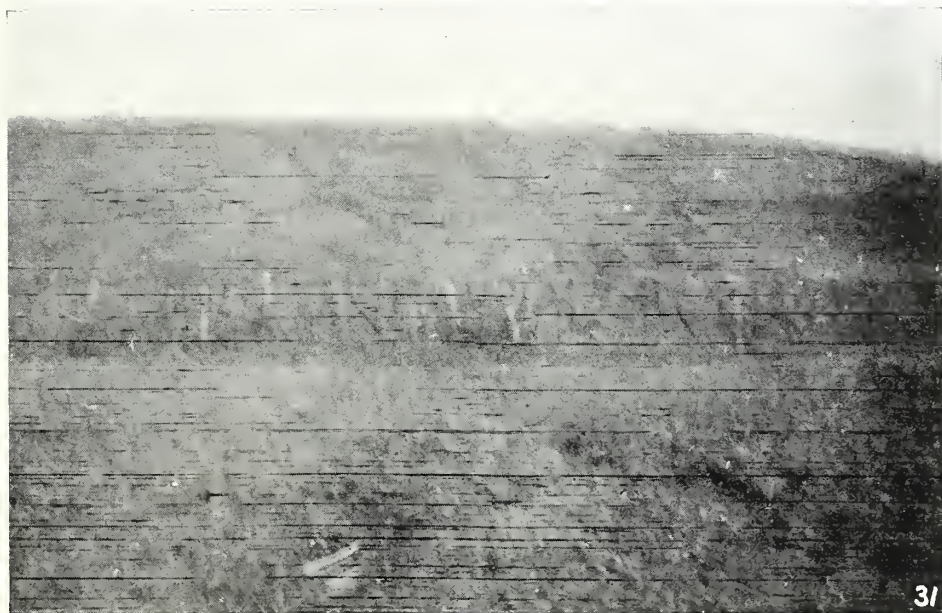
28. In this dugout was located the 3d battalion dressing station. Reference is made to it under picture No. 23. Note the effect of a shell that struck the corner at the right



29. Inside of dugout shown in No. 28



30. Inside of another dugout



31. Along this ridge one part of the advance was made. The picture was taken from the top of the trench to the left of the dugout in No. 28 and looking out across No-Man's Land toward the woods from which the Boches were driven



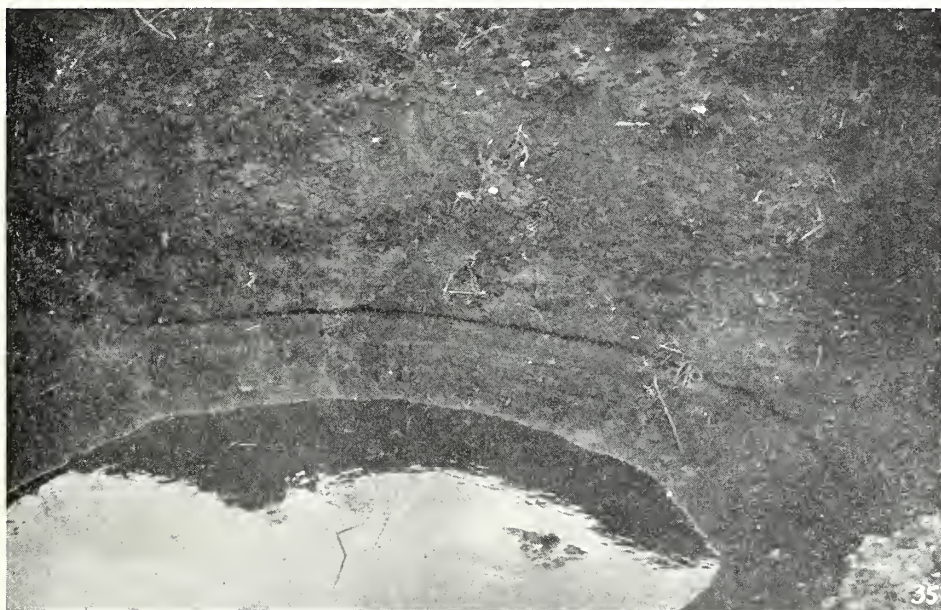
32. An example of what was happening on that ridge, shown in No. 31, while the advance was being made



33. A wire entanglement that had to be negotiated by the 1st battalion



34. Another type of wire entanglement. This was placed by being stretched out like an accordion



35. This hole is fully 20 feet across and 12 feet deep. It is in the meadow to the right of the ridge shown in No. 31



36. Another sample of some incidents of the advance, that sometimes attracted attention. The hole is nearly filled with water



37. Through this tangle of underbrush, made more difficult still by wire, the advance was made on the left. Enemy machine gunners stuck as long as they could in the undergrowth and fired in the face of the advance.



38

38. An example of what was happening in that woods. This tree is 18 inches in diameter



39

39. A machine-gun nest protecting a point in the Germans advance trenches on the road from Manheuelles to Ville-en-Woevre. The trench was really a small stream. Note the equipment discarded by the wounded. The 1st battalion will remember something of this



40. An amusing (?) little spot. The friendly (?) little steel pellets with which the Germans welcomed an approach to such a bit of their work were lying plentifully about when this picture was made



41. In this hole about 100 yards in front of the Hindenburg line many of the wounded of the 3d battalion received first aid. It is about three feet deep and now full of water. Note the equipment. The enemy was on three sides. His main line of defence is outside the picture at the right



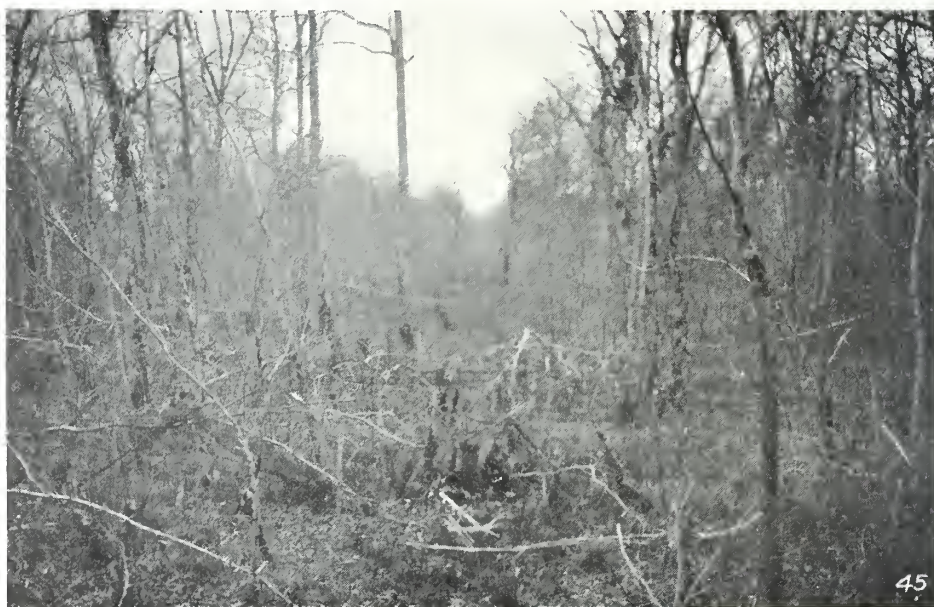
42. Another view of the hole shown in No. 41. Looking straight across it toward the enemy line. Note the bayonet stuck in the ground at the water's edge



43. Looking backward from the hole of No. 41. In the near foreground is seen a shelf cut in the edge of hole. On this, below the range of the bullets, the wounded were laid one at a time to be given first aid



44. View of the cleared space about fifty yards wide before the Hindenburg line. The thick underbrush has been cleared away to expose the attackers as they cross it. Note the wire immediately before the trench in the background



45. Avenue cut through the forest for signalling. Note the small dark spot near the ground at the far end. It is a window of a "Blink Station"



46. A closer view of the wire at the background of No. 44



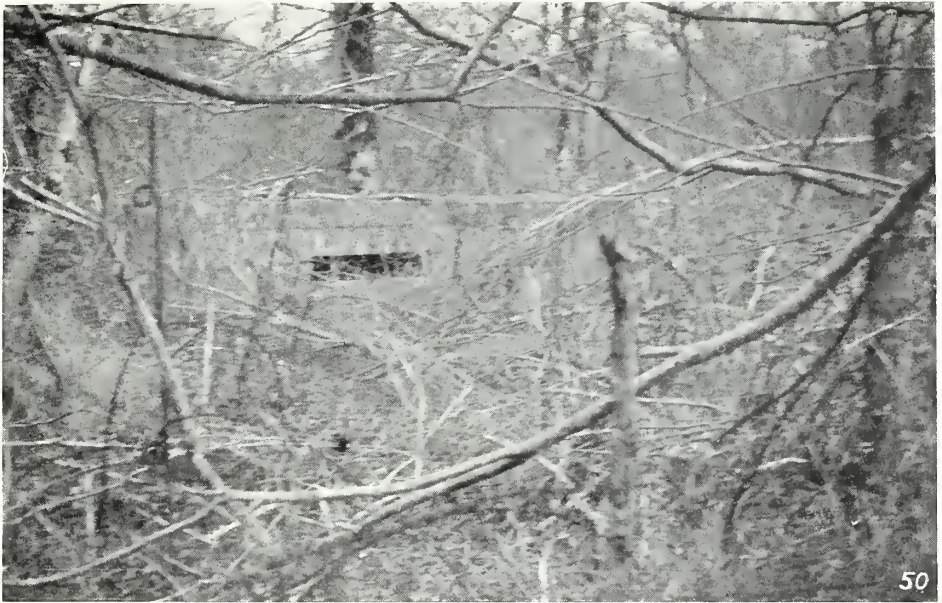
47. First line of wire just before the Hun trench



48. Close up of wire showing the beginning of the zig-zag path through the entanglement. This was their main line of defense and, of course, the outposts had to have a quick way of getting through when pressed. This path is raked by the machine-gun position shown in No. 49



49. The sapling seen here was cut down by machine-gun bullets fired at Co. "L" and Co. "I." It is four inches in diameter. The gun was within the concrete nest ("pill box") whose mouth is seen in the background just behind and about half way down the stump of the sapling. Fritz was scared and shooting high



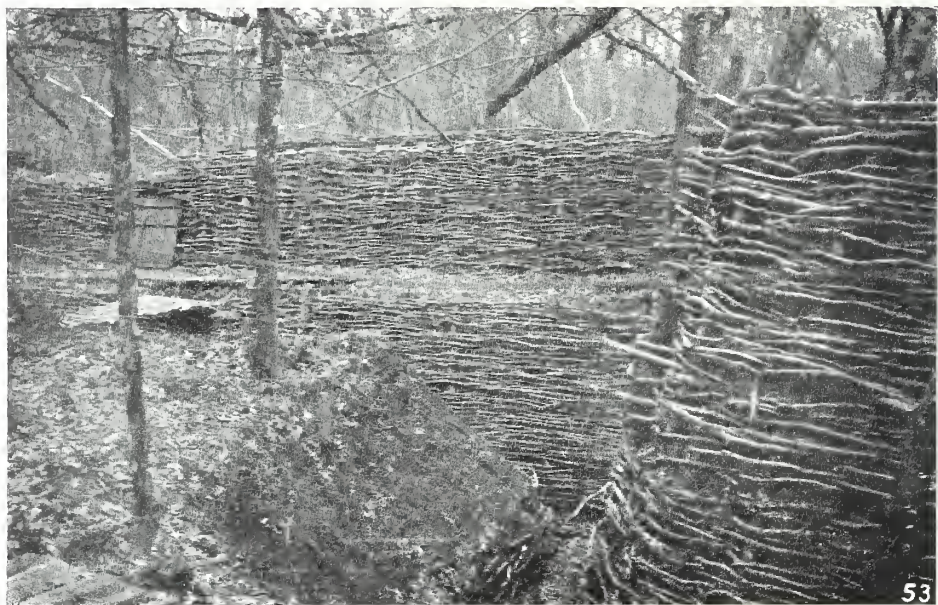
50. Closer up of machine-gun nest seen in No. 49



51. No. 49 machine-gun nest seen from behind. Note the thickness of the walls and roof



52. Concrete top of dugout in trench near machine-gun nest seen in No. 49



53. Back side of trench in which machine-gun nest seen in previous pictures was located



54. A pile of empty cartridges which sent their bullets at us



55. Road between Haudiomont and Manheuelles. Note what happened to the trees. Does anybody remember that road?



55a. Orchard back of Manheuelles



56. General view of Manheuelles. It was in the ruins of this town that the regimental P.C. was established by the night of November 9th. The regimental dressing station was also located here



57

57. Another view of Manheuelles



58

58. Manheuelles again



59

59. Manheuelles again



60

60. Another view in Manheuelles



61. Concrete machine-gun nest in the street in the center of Manheuelles. It commands the street in three directions



62. Door into machine-gun nest seen in No. 61



63. Another side of the same machine-gun nest. The cross marks the grave of a German killed in the advance of November 9th



64. Road beyond Manheuelles looking toward Fresnes-en-Woevre in the distance



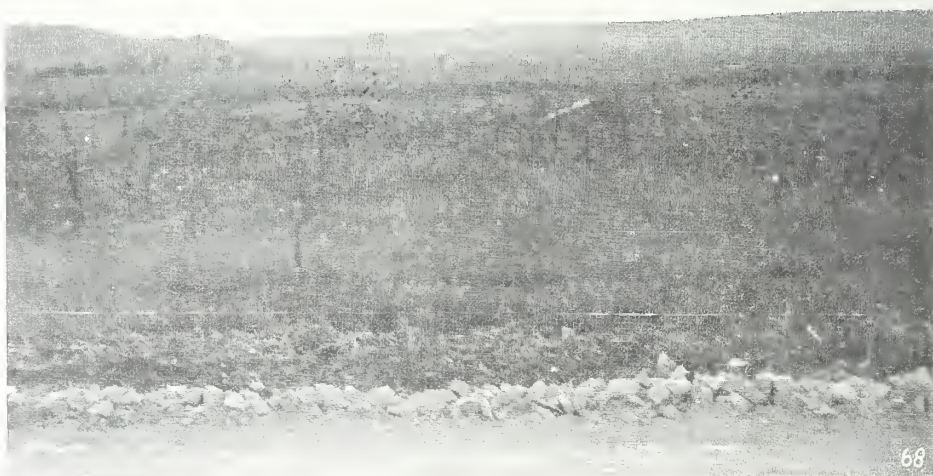
65. Another view of Fresnes-en-Woevre



66. This is a lookout in the top of a tall tree atop the hill before Ville-en-Woevre. From this the German could see over the whole country across which our advance went from Ronvaux and Bordeaux to Bonzee and Fresnes-en-Woevre. He could therefore direct his artillery with telling effect



67. Looking out across the rolling plain toward Manheuelles from the lookout in No. 66. This is the view Fritz had. Across this plain the 2d battalion advanced. Note the old camouflaging on both sides the road



68. Another view of the plain seen in No. 67. Note the wire entanglements



69. Another view of the plain seen in No. 67



70. Wire entanglements in the field to the left of the road between Haudiomont and Manheuelles



71. Entertainment furnished by Heinie while the advance was being made across the plain toward Ville-en-Woevre



72. Some wicked difficulties in the way



73. Who dug himself in here?



74. The man who did this was particular about his bed. He has covered the bottom of his hole with thistles!



75. The picture does not show it very well, but this is where some Germans dug in on the plain facing our troops. Their digging was in the form of a question mark. Fritz seemed to wonder why he had to fall back



76. Field to right of road between Manheuelles and Fresnes-en-Woevre. Bonzee lies outside this picture at the right. This was taken from the edge of Manheuelles



77. A mine which failed to go off. This had been hurriedly planted in an outpost trench by the Hun to stop his foe



78. This one went off. The ruin here was once a mighty concrete machine-gun nest



79. What a high-explosive shell sent over by Heinie did to the ground part of the 324th had to cross



80. Another high-explosive shell landed



81. These were mines placed at intervals of about eight feet just outside the wire before Fritz's main line of defense



82. Two can play at the artillery game. These two ten-inch shells from our big naval guns fell just before Heinie's trench and failed to explode, but many others like them did not fail



83. One of those ten-inch toys struck the enemy's supply narrow-gauge track and played havoc



84. Heinie jumped when this happened. It hit within 20 feet of one of his strong points



85. One of our ten-inch boys hit a pile of ammunition here directly in the Hun trench. Both ammunition and trench were scattered all about



86. Puzzle picture. Find the German who wore that helmet



87. Here is a direct hit in the Hindenburg line by a puny little ten-inch boy



88. Fritz felt pretty safe when he got inside. (See next picture)



89. Two direct hits on the dugout shown in No. 88. It was a three-inch shell that did this. One went right through the roof



90. Ville-en-Woevre was the only one of a dozen ruined villages in this section to which any of the refugees had returned in April, 1919. These six men, one woman and one child were the first. They had been back only two weeks, but they had already brought their rabbits, cows, chickens and vin rouge, and had started cheerfully to repair their ruined homes little by little



91. Ruins of the church in Ville-en-Woevre. This village was the objective of the 324th Infantry in its advance of November 9th-11th



92. Though the whole village was destroyed and the little group of refugees had been back only two weeks they had set up an image of the Virgin Mary in what was left of the sacristy of their church, and placed a rude bench before it for worship. Ville-en-Woevre



93

93. This shack was warm and comfortable and served the German officer, who occupied it, as a welcome relief from the dugouts when the line was quiet. This is just back of the line



94

94. Heinie had to have his beer. He evidently brewed it right on the spot, within a hundred yards of the Hindenburg defense



95. This concrete door leads to a well-appointed dugout where fifty men could be comfortable. It had several rooms, floors, chairs, tables, electric lights, pictures on the walls, and iron beds



96. Concrete walk running back of the main German line for several miles to rest and supply stations



97. Ornamented cottage where a German officer lived with all the comforts of home. He had to leave his piano among many other things



98. The Huns were prepared to stay. This swimming pool was about two miles behind their lines



99. Some who did stay. German cemetery back of St. Mihiel



100. General Headquarters of the A.E.F. at Chaumont. The handling of over two million men was directed here. General Pershing's office is just under the clock in the center



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